

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
PROPOSED BILL No. 5046
AN ACT CONCERNING THE SMALL-CONTRACTOR SET-ASIDE PROGRAM
AND THE DEFINITION OF SMALL BUSINESSES.**

February 10, 2009 Public Hearing

Good Morning Chairman Berger and Chairman LeBeau and Ranking Members
Representative Alberts and Senator Frantz.

My name is Rifat Saleh and I am the owner of RHS Consulting Design, LLC located in Wolcott, Connecticut. I am here to testify in favor of the House Bill 5046 concerning the small contractor set aside program as it relates to micro businesses. My business would be considered a micro business.

RHS Consulting Design is a full service engineering firm that specializes in land survey, design and construction of highways and bridges, buildings, tunnels, towers, and bridge safety inspection, founded in 2003. We are licensed by the State of Connecticut in the areas of land survey, civil engineering and construction administration. We are on the prequalified consultant list by ConnDOT to provide engineering services. I employ a total of nine people in which five are licensed professional engineers in State of Connecticut, New York and elsewhere. I am adjunct professor at University of Hartford, teaching structural engineering courses. I also serve as a Structural Engineer Specialist with Urban Search and Rescue of Connecticut, with the Homeland Security Task force.

House Bill 5046 is extremely imperative to the survival and expansion of our business. Although we are a small business certified, however, we can not be qualified as a disadvantage business or a set-aside program that is currently in place for those firms. I believe that a fair definition of a micro business is a firm that does 3 or 4 million dollars of total sales per fiscal year, and has a set side requirements not less than 15% from the total value of all state contracts. A program that support business loans, and commence tax incentives for micro small businesses.

Giving the current economic crisis, every business is suffering, especially those at the bottom of the food chain. At the present time, multi million dollar corporations with their endless resources are more often competing for small municipal and DOT projects to eliminate micro businesses.

As a micro business owner, I find one way to contribute to the growth of the economy is to be part of the set a side program in State of Connecticut, employ additional engineers, provide training, offer educational programs, increase the company resources to provide quality work and assure client satisfaction.

The benefits for the State of Connecticut are: provide equal opportunities for growth to competent micro and new established businesses despite of their authenticity, background, race or gender. Create jobs, diversify areas of professional services, improve the quality of work and streamline the culture of doing business in State of Connecticut.

I would like to thank the Commerce Committee for holding a public hearing on this concept. I will answer any questions the committee may have.